

NEWS RELEASE

PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION



Colville National Forest

765 South Main St., Colville, WA 99114 OR www.fs.fed.us/r6/colville

Contact: Franklin Pemberton, 509.684.7177

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East Wedge Project Out for Public Review

Colville, WA - Forest officials of the Colville National Forest announced today the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed East Wedge project is now available for public review and comment. The project area is located approximately 21 miles north of Kettle Falls between the Columbia and Kettle Rivers and adjacent to the Canadian border.

The project includes commercial timber harvest, mechanical treatment of fuels, underburning, noncommercial thinning, new road construction, reconstruction and road decommissioning.

The East Wedge project is the result of an agreement between the Forest Service and the Stevens County Conservation District (SCCD) where the SCCD developed a proposal and is completing the environmental analysis.

"This is a different way of doing business for the Forest Service. It's exciting to see the community involved in planning a project in a whole new way. Plus, we've already been able to provide new jobs in the community -- before the work on the land has even begun." Said Colville National Forest Supervisor Laura Jo West.

The Stevens County Conservation District (SCCD) is administering the project with the Forest Service for planning and implementing fuels reduction and forest health activities on approximately 43,000 acres of the Colville National Forest. During the planning phase of the project which includes development of the EA, the SCCD received public input through mailings, open public meetings and participation of interested entities including the Public Lands Advisory Committee, Northeast Washington Forestry Committee, Tri-County Motorized Recreation Association, Stevens County Cattlemen's Association, Stevens County Farm Bureau, and the U.S. Border Patrol.

"The Stevens County Conservation District is proud to work with the Forest Service in the planning and implementing of this project. This innovative approach to land management planning emphasizes local community input." Stated Claudia Michalke, SCCD East Wedge Project Administrator.

The 30-day comment period begins with publication of a legal notice in the *Colville Statesman-Examiner* newspaper. The notice is expected to appear in the September 28, 2011, edition.

If you have questions regarding this project or on how to comment on the project, please contact Bill Shields, CNF NEPA/FOIA Coordinator at (509) 684-7235 or by e-mail at bshields@fs.fed.us.

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